Practice:

Approaching Discernment through the Body

*If your body could talk, what would it say to you about your discernment? This prayer sets up a dialogue between you and your body. The language your body will use is the sensations that arise as you do the exercise. I refer to these sensations as “felt sense” or “body sense.” Does adrenalin hit your blood stream and fill you with energy? Perhaps your stomach knots up. Your shoulders may tense up or relax; your face may frown or smile. Are you filled with a sense of well-being or with a vague foreboding that locates itself somewhere in your body? These are examples of body-senses. When, in step 5, the directions invite you into a dialogue with your body, you might say to your body, for example, “Would it feel different if I got someone to help me instead of trying to do it by myself?”*

*We begin, as we do all discernment prayer, by renewing our desire to meet God through our discernment.*

1. Prayerfully renew your desire to follow God’s call. Ask God to let this desire itself be more important

than any specific outcome. If at any time you find your spiritual freedom fading, return to this prayer.

Repeat it as often as necessary to help you remain indifferent to any particular outcome.

2. Clear a space inside you. Allow yourself to become aware of your body, all its parts and organs. Notice

the blood flowing and the muscles going about their work, your organs functioning without you attending

to them.

3. While attentive to your body and its responses, present to it your discernment question in some detail

and pay attention to everything that happens in your body as you do.

4. What do you sense in your body with respect to your question? What is the quality of the felt-sense?

Write it out in your journal in some detail.

5. Carry on a dialogue with your body about your discernment question. If your body-sense shifts, follow

where it takes you.

6. Ask this body sensation what message it might bring about a decision. Record any new awareness

about a potential decision that comes through your body.

7. Return to your desire to follow God’s call. Place your new awareness before God and notice what

happens. Record this outcome, too.

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Knox, 2008, 80-81.

Practice:

Approaching Discernment through Feelings

*What do your feelings tell you about your issue? After noticing the whole range of feelings, this prayer asks you to check for two that are key in discernment. If using your feelings to come to a decision seems risky, remember that other entry points balance the contribution that feelings make to your discernment.*

1. Allow yourself to become aware of God’s presence, God’s love and care for you personally. Rest for as long as you wish in the sense of God’s love. Renew your desire to follow God’s call as it unfolds through your decision.

2. Review all the options you are considering, noting all the feelings they arouse in you. Record the

feelings in your journal, taking care not to overlook ones that you don’t like or that seem “off-base.”

3. If you were going to make a decision just on the basis of these feelings, what are you inclined toward?

How do you feel about that possibility? Record these feelings as well.

4. Sit with the tentative decision that is forming, along with all its accompanying feelings, to see what it

produces in you.

Does it produce “consolation,” a sense of increasing faith, hope, love, peace with God, others and

oneself, a “rightness” that is deeper than just “feeling good?”

OR

Do you sense “desolation,” a lessening of faith, hope and love, restlessness, discouragement,

heaviness, disinclination to proceed, a sense of “wrongness?” (God may indeed call us despite our fear or

hopelessness or other “negative feeling;” if so, the sense of “rightness” will be deeper than the sense of

discomfort.)

5. Revise your tentative decision based on this sense of “consolation” or “desolation.” Note your

tentative decision and the inner movements that led to it in your journal.

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Knox. 2008, pp. 212-122.